

United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency  
Region 8

## FAX TRANSMITTAL

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# Fact Sheet

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

LEEDS SILVER RECLAMATION SITE

WASHINGTON COUNTY, UTAH

FEBRUARY 1996

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The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is conducting a Removal operation at the Leeds Silver Reclamation Site located 2 miles west of the town of Leeds, Utah. The Site is an inoperative ore processing facility which utilized an acid heap leach process for the extraction of copper and silver. The owner and former operator is 5M Inc. of Hurricane, Utah. This fact sheet provides information about EPA's current activities and lists contacts for those who have questions or concerns.

The Utah Department of Environmental Quality (UDEQ) made a preliminary study of the site in 1991. EPA conducted a field reconnaissance and wetland assessment in 1992 and further investigations in 1993 and 1994. The results of these investigations verify that contamination on the Site is a threat to human health and the environment:

- on-site materials (ore piles, leach pad, pregnant and overflow ponds) are the source of heavy metals contamination in soil, and possibly in surface and subsurface waters at the Site;
- acidic water in the ponds is likely to dissolve heavy metals in the sediment and carry them to the groundwater.
- the highly acidic nature of the water in the ponds may pose a health risk to children, trespassers and wildlife;
- the Site is a potential source of downgradient surface-water contamination which could flow into pasture, lawn and garden irrigation water, livestock water and wells which are used for drinking water;
- contaminated runoff from the ponds could potentially affect surface water as far down as the city of St. George if a major storm event occurred;
- during dry, windy days, the contaminants on-site will continue to be airborne and migrate off-site to nearby acreages, residences and/or wetlands.



Since conditions at the Site pose an imminent and substantial danger to human health and the environment, EPA will take the following actions to control/remove the contaminants and stabilize on-site materials:

- remove water from overflow and pregnant ponds;
- shape heap so that it has a slope of 3% to carry off moisture;
- build an engineered cap over the heap to provide a safe cover that keeps the contaminants in the heap from migrating and contacting surface water.

The cap will be about five feet thick, composed of a geosynthetic liner at the base, then a thick layer of compacted soil covered with a layer of waste rock on top. A French drain will be constructed around the base of the heap to direct precipitation away from the cap.

Contractors for EPA will mobilize their equipment on-site between February 12 and February 19 and begin work on February 20. EPA expects this removal action to take approximately two months, after which Site monitoring will continue for a year.

For further information, please call Peter Stevenson or Mary Hagan at EPA or Renette Anderson at UDEQ, at the numbers listed above.